

Minimizing Environmental Impact during Student Field Days

With a small amount of planning, your students can lessen the environmental impact they have on field study sites by following a few basic guidelines. This information should be reviewed with them prior to the field trip day and then again, in a condensed form as a reminder that morning.

Litter Prevention

Students should be instructed to stow all the items they will need for the day in a back pack or book bag with ample room for outerwear that may be shed as the day grows warmer. All lunch or snack items should be stored in a plastic container or Ziploc bag in which all trash wrappers can be returned to the student's home. No trash receptacles will be provided on site. Groups must carry out everything they bring.

All participants should bring a sturdy reusable water bottle to help prevent litter.

Ask adult chaperones and students to pick-up any trash from the station locations that may have been left from a previous group and add it to what they are taking away. Adult chaperones may want to bring a few extra large Ziploc bags in anticipation.

Soil Erosion and Compaction

All participants need to stay on paved walking areas when available and on the designated trail while walking through the woods and wetlands. Special care should be given near the river as banks may be unstable.

All participants should be instructed to wear old sneakers, low hiking shoes or other footwear that is sturdy and covers their foot, but doesn't have excessive weight or tread (such as combat type boots).

Plant and Wildlife Protection

If students leave a designated trail to conduct an activity, caution should be used so that fragile plants are not trampled or young saplings snapped. No wildflowers or other plant materials should be picked.

Bird nests or other animal shelters should not be disturbed.

Wildlife, such as a young rabbit that appears to be abandoned or a box turtle, should not be handled and should be left where they are found.

Insect repellent should be applied in advance of the start of the program, not sprayed at flying bugs in the study area.

If a student is asked by an instructor to help collect an aquatic organism, they should return any stone, branch or leaf pack back to its original position in the stream or river.